

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**ALFA SCORING GUIDE**

For each scale, choose the category that best describes the person for most of the past six months for the initial ALFA. Subsequent ALFAs should describe the person for most of the past thirty days. If there is no score description that adequately describes the person, the clinician should use best judgement to assign a score. Unless noted otherwise, the person's functioning should be rated in comparison to the general population, and without consideration of the *cause* of the dysfunction.

**Role Performance**

*This scale measures the person's capacity to perform the present major role function in society--school, work, parenting or other developmentally appropriate responsibility.*

**Severe Dysfunction** **41 - 50**

Incapacity or absent motivation for productive functioning, or attempts at productive functioning are consistently ineffective. Unable to work, attend school, or meet other developmentally appropriate responsibilities or constantly disruptive at work or at school.

**Moderate Dysfunction** **31 - 40**

Occasional major or frequent minor disruptions of role functioning. Contribution is marginal, or seldom meets usual expectations. May require structured or supervised work or school setting. Frequently in trouble at work or school. Frequently terminated from work or suspended/expelled from school. Performance significantly below expectation for cognitive/developmental level.

**Slight Dysfunction** **21 - 30**

Able to work or attend school full time or perform other developmentally appropriate responsibilities with minimal or only occasional disruption. Dysfunction may take the form of chronic mild overall inadequacy or sporadic failures of a more dramatic sort. May have occasional problems with tardiness or absenteeism.

**No Dysfunction** **11 - 20**

Able to work or attend school full time or other developmentally appropriate responsibilities without assistance or supervision, and without disruptions. Comfortable and competent in assigned roles. Performance is within expectation for cognitive/developmental level.

**Superior Function** **1 - 10**

Able to work or attend school full time without unscheduled absences or consistently perform developmentally appropriate responsibilities without distraction. Efficiency of function is such that tasks are completed in less than the expected time frame, or appear to be easier than for others of the same developmental level. Consistently exceeds expectations.

## ALFA SCORING GUIDE (continued)

### Self Care/Basic Living Skills (Adult)

*This scale measures the person's capacity to live independently or in a family setting, including the capacity to provide or arrange for needs such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care.*

#### Severe Dysfunction

**41 - 50**

Unable to attend to the majority of basic needs of hygiene, grooming, nutrition, medical and dental care. Unable to care for self in safe or sanitary manner. Housing, food and clothing, must be provided or arranged for by others. Refuses treatment for life-threatening illnesses because of behavioral health disorder.

#### Moderate Dysfunction

**31 - 40**

Neglect or disruption of ability to attend to some basic needs, or denial of need for assistance or support. Unable to maintain hygiene, diet, or clothing. May need assistance in caring for self. Unwilling to seek prenatal care or necessary medical/dental care for serious medical or dental conditions.

#### Slight Dysfunction

**21 - 30**

Usually attends to basic survival needs, hygiene, grooming, nutritional, but may need reminders. Frequently short of funds; may need prompting to attend to medical or dental care.

#### No Dysfunction

**11 - 20**

Neatly groomed and dressed. Personal environment is clean and tidy. Able to obtain or arrange for all basic needs, including adequate housing, food, clothing, money, medical and dental care without significant difficulty.

#### Superior Function

**1 - 10**

Maintained a professional appearance, paid more than ordinary attention to grooming, dress and personal environment, or needs can be adequately and independently obtained despite serious obstacles such as extreme age, serious physical handicap, or severe poverty.

### **Self Care/Basic Living Skills (Child)**

*This scale measures the child's capacity to live in a family setting. Children should be rated on their ability to meet the performance expectations of the parent or primary care giver. Unlike other scales in this instrument, this scale should be rated from the point of view of the care giver, not the evaluator.*

#### **Severe Dysfunction**

**41 - 50**

Requires 24 hour trained supervision. Unable to meet even minimal performance expectations. If in the home, parents/custodians report that the child's functioning has a significant negative impact on the family's personal relationships, health, and daily activities, such as job loss and divorce.

#### **Moderate Dysfunction**

**31 - 40**

Requires constant supervision. If in the home, family reports that the child's functioning has some negative impact on the family's personal relationships or daily activities, but primary relationships and gainful employment are not disrupted. Performance is significantly below expectation.

#### **Slight Dysfunction**

**21 - 30**

Performance is below expectation, but family members are usually able to provide additional supervision with minimal impact on finances, relationships, or other household activities.

#### **No Dysfunction**

**11 - 20**

Performance is within expectation. Occasional need for prompting or attention to special needs.

#### **Superior Function**

**1 - 10**

Performance consistently exceeds expectations. Completes assigned responsibilities without prompting.

### **Social/Legal**

*This scale measures the extent and ease with which the person is able to maintain conduct within the limits prescribed by law, rules and social expectations. Both antisocial and illegal behaviors should be considered in the rating. The rating should be based on expectation for age/developmental level, and, like all other ALFA scales, is independent of whether the behavior is "due to" a behavioral health disorder.*

#### **Severe Dysfunction**

**41 - 50**

Seriously disruptive to family and/or community or pervasively dangerous to others' bodily safety. Does not comply/conform to rules or laws. Has been arrested, incarcerated or hospitalized one or more times or at risk of confinement because of illegal, antisocial or dangerous behavior. Imminent danger to others or property. Regularly engages in assaultive behavior. For adults, persistently neglectful or abusive towards others in the person's care.

#### **Moderate Dysfunction**

**31 - 40**

So disruptive or belligerent as to make ordinary social interaction difficult, but danger to family, others or property is not imminent. Frequent contacts with the law, including drug possession or alcohol or other drug-related charges. On probation, or paroled after incarceration. Conforms to rules only when convenient or profitable. Personal gain outweighs concern for others. Disregard for safety or rights of others. For adults, frequently neglectful of others in the person's care.

#### **Slight Dysfunction**

**21 - 30**

May be disruptive, belligerent or quarrelsome, but harm or injury to others is infrequent. Occasionally bends or violates rules or laws for personal gain or without developmentally appropriate concern for others. Not reliable, may be in trouble with the law or other authority more frequently than most peers, but has no conscious desire to harm others. May create hazard to others through disregard of normal safety practices.

#### **No Dysfunction**

**11 - 20**

Has conformed to social and legal expectations. Cooperates in most activities, creates little disruption and no serious harm to others. Occasional breaking or bending of rules with no harm to others. Shows developmentally appropriate empathy and concern for others.

#### **Superior Function**

**1 - 10**

Almost always conforms to rules and laws with ease, abiding by the "spirit" as well as the "letter" of the law. Rare deviations from rules or regulations are for altruistic purposes. Honest and considerate of others.

## ALFA SCORING GUIDE (continued)

### Interpersonal Relations

*This scale measures the adequacy with which the person develops and/or maintains interpersonal relationships inside and outside of the family. Relationships should be compared to similar relationships by others of the same age, sex, and culture.*

#### **Severe Dysfunction**

**41 - 50**

Very few, if any, close relationships. Extremely isolated or withdrawn. No age appropriate social skills.

#### **Moderate Dysfunction**

**31 - 40**

Difficulty making friends. Few friends or tenuous, strained relationships. Frequent or major disruption of relationships with others. Unable to sustain relationships independent of substance use or illegal activity.

#### **Slight Dysfunction**

**21 - 30**

Occasional or mild disruption of relationships with others. Relationships may not be age-appropriate. Some difficulty in developing or keeping satisfying friendships. May seem lonely or shy.

#### **No Dysfunction**

**11 - 20**

Maintains social or intimate relationships without reliance on substances of abuse.

#### **Superior Function**

**1 - 10**

Relationships are consistently satisfying. Social skills are highly developed for age and developmental level. Has the ability to enjoy and maintain a wide variety of relationships.

### Substance Use

*This scale measures the extent to which a person's use of substances interferes with the person's functioning. For children, **any** use of alcohol or other illegal substances other than for cultural or religious requirements should be considered dysfunctional.*

#### Severe Dysfunction

41 - 50

Disabled or incapacitated due to substance use. Substance abuse dominates the person's life. Serious medical and/or social consequences are accepted as necessary inconveniences. Unable to function at home, in school or at work due to alcohol, drugs or other substances. Has had serious drug overdoses, high risk pregnancies or other life-threatening medical disorders related to uncontrolled substance use. Neglected or abused children (in their care) or placed children at risk because of substance-related activities. Intravenous drug use without regard to health consequences. Engages in high risk activities to support substance use.

#### Moderate Dysfunction

31 - 40

Frequent difficulties in functioning due to substance use. Little control over use. Lifestyle revolves around acquisition and abuse of one or more substances. May feel unable to function, showing serious deterioration when deprived of substances of abuse. Frequent hangovers/highs or other effects of substance abuse which are causing difficulty at school, work, or at home and/or in other social situations.

#### Slight Dysfunction

21 - 30

Occasional or mild difficulties in functioning due to substance use. Occasional difficulty at work or at school due to hangover or getting "high" on the job or at school; Cautioned or referred by primary physician regarding substance use.

#### No Dysfunction

11 - 20

No impairment of functioning due to substance use. Substance use is controlled so that it is not apparently detrimental to over-all functioning or well-being. Substances used and amount of use are within commonly accepted range of the person's subculture. Infrequent excesses may occur in situations where such indulgences have no serious consequence.

#### Superior Function

1 - 10

All substances are used adaptively with good control. Substances known to be harmful are used sparingly, if at all.

**ALFA SCORING GUIDE** (continued)

**Family/Living Environment**

*This scale measures the adequacy and safety of the living environment and the risk of exposure to violence. For children, adequacy of care givers to provide appropriate supervision and support is also considered.*

**Severe Dysfunction**

**41 - 50**

Severe or frequent domestic violence takes place in the home. Living on the street, homeless shelter, or other imminently dangerous living environment. And/or: Child has been removed from the home due to sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect.

**Moderate Dysfunction**

**31 - 40**

In housing that was unsafe or unsatisfactory or was evicted from an apartment or requested to leave living quarters, or living environment is not conducive to recovery or increases risks of relapse. Domestic violence or serious threat of violence takes place in the home. And/or: Child is at risk of abuse or neglect. Family is unable/unwilling to cooperate with medical or behavioral health service plan. Child Protective Services has been involved with the family, and/or there is a continuing risk of removal from the family because of abuse or neglect. Regular exposure to or risk of violence in the home.

**Slight Dysfunction**

**21 - 30**

In housing that is safe and comfortable, but person and/or other household members are dissatisfied with living arrangement. And/or: Conflictual family setting, but no suspicion of abuse or neglect. Family may require extra assistance to attend to child's needs.

**No Dysfunction**

**11 - 20**

Independently or with other household members in safe, satisfactory housing. And/or: Family is supportive and consistently attends to child's needs.

**Superior Function**

**1 - 10**

Highly desirable physical environment. And/or: Family demonstrates superior support and encouragement, even to high-need child or other family member.

### Thinking/Cognition

*This category refers to thought processes, or cognition, memory and overall intellectual functioning.*

#### Severe Dysfunction

41 - 50

Incapacitated due to impaired thought and thinking processes. Extreme disruption or absence of rational thinking. Delusions, frequent hallucinations or illusions are so severe and constant that the person cannot function safely without constant supervision;

**or** Severe cognitive deficit and/or mental retardation. Severe motor and language impairments, or loss of memory. Unable to function safely without constant supervision.  
**or** IQ  $\leq$  35.

#### Moderate Dysfunction

31 - 40

Frequent or consistent interference with daily life due to impaired thinking. Frequent distortion of thinking or substitution of fantasy for reality. Delusions and/or hallucinations interfere with normal daily functioning. May be preoccupied by unusual thoughts.

**or** Moderate cognitive deficit and/or mental retardation, or moderate short term memory loss,  
**or** IQ 35 - 55.

#### Slight Dysfunction

21 - 30

Occasional disruptions of daily life due to impaired thought and thinking processes. Thinking occasionally distorted by magical thinking, emotional factors or other personal features. Communications may involve misunderstandings due to mild thought disorders. Peculiar beliefs or perceptions may occasionally impair functioning. If delusions or hallucinations are present, they do not interfere with the person's functioning.

**or** Mild cognitive deficit and/or mental retardation. Intellectual capacity slightly below average, but can function well in many areas. Occasionally forgetful, but is able to compensate. May be unable to fully comprehend consequences of behavior.  
**or** IQ 55 - 70.

#### No Dysfunction

11 - 20

No evidence of disruption of daily life due to thought and thinking difficulties. Thinking is generally accurate and realistic. Thinking is rarely distorted by beliefs with no objective basis. Capable of rational thinking and logical thought processes. Oriented in all spheres. No memory loss. Intellectual capacity and logical thinking are appropriate for age.

#### Superior Function

1 - 10

Thinking seems consistently clear, well-organized, rational, and realistic. The person may indulge in irrational thinking or fantasy, but is always able to clearly distinguishing it from reality. Superior intellectual capacity and functioning.



### Feeling/Affect/Mood

*This scale measures the extent to which the person's emotional life is well-modulated or out of control. Consider appropriateness of emotional responses to immediate and long-range situational factors, compared to others of the same age, sex and culture.*

#### Severe Dysfunction

41 - 50

Severe disruption of daily life due to affective disturbance such that the individual may have frequent thoughts of death, suicide, or self-harm, often with behavioral intent and/or plan, or the individual is unable to carry out usual daily activities such as personal hygiene, attending work or school, or performing household functions. Eating, sleeping, or other bodily functions may be markedly disrupted and may have already resulted in significant weight loss or weight gain, or other impairment of health. Affective disruption may cause risk of significant damage to the person's education, livelihood, career, or personal relationships.

#### Moderate Dysfunction

31 - 40

Occasional major or frequent moderate disruption of daily life due to emotional state. Frequent thoughts of death, suicide, or self-harm, but without immediate behavioral intent. Disturbance of functions, such as eating, sleeping, and personal hygiene, if present, has not significantly affected weight or impaired health. Mood disorder may cause temporary disturbance to the person's education, livelihood, career, or personal relationships.

#### Slight Dysfunction

21 - 30

Occasional disruption of daily life due to feelings of anxiety, anger or depression. Thoughts of suicide or self-harm, if present, are fleeting and without behavioral intent. No noticeable effect on functions such as eating, sleeping, or personal hygiene. Emotional state does not noticeably impair the person's education, livelihood, career, or personal relationships.

#### No Dysfunction

11 - 20

No disruption of daily life due to anxiety, depression, or disturbance of mood. Reactions to stressful events are age appropriate. Bodily functions are intact.

#### Superior Function

1 - 10

Anxiety, depression, or disturbance of mood is absent or rare. The person's emotional life is characterized by realistic optimism, as appropriate to his/her situation. Reactions to stressful situations are adaptive and time limited.

## ALFA SCORING GUIDE (continued)

### Medical/Physical

*This scale measures the extent to which the person may require medical or other resources, due to illness, injury and/or disabling physical conditions.*

#### Severe Dysfunction

41 - 50

Incapacitated due to medical/physical condition. Totally dependent on others for activities of daily living or for skilled medical/nursing interventions.

#### Moderate Dysfunction

31 - 40

Frequent and/or severe problems with health. Person suffers from serious injury, illness, or other physical condition that limits physical functioning to the degree that assistance is often, but not always, necessary. Includes condition that would be life-threatening without appropriate daily care, or that require hospitalization or daily nursing care (for example, insulin-dependent diabetes, seizure disorder, acquired immunodeficiency, withdrawal, overdose and other addiction-related medical disorders). Multiple ER admissions or hospitalizations for substance-related and/or other health conditions. High-risk pregnancy. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

#### Slight Dysfunction

21 - 30

Chronic medical problems that do not interfere with daily living. Needs medication on a regular basis to control chronic medical problems such as hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and asthma. Disorders in this range are not imminently life-threatening. At risk of medical disorder because of poverty, poor nutrition, low socioeconomic status, social isolation, HIV positive status, or substance use, including tobacco, alcohol and IV drug use.

#### No Dysfunction

11 - 20

No physical problems that interfere with daily life. Generally good health without undue distress or disruption due to common ailments and minor injuries. Occasional colds, fatigue, headaches, gastro-intestinal upsets, and common ailments that are endemic in the community.

#### Superior Function

1 - 10

Consistently enjoys "excellent health." Infrequent minor ills cause little discomfort, and are marked by rapid recovery. Physical injury is rare and healing is rapid. Non-smoker, or has not smoked for five years or more.